



Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

Issue 34

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This newsletter is published by the American Citizen Services (ACS) Unit, U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai. If there are any particular topics you are interested in, please contact ACS at: ShanghaiACS@state.gov.

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Special points of interest:

- * Beware of Scam Artists
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- * Be Aware of Tax Scams

National Adoption Month

This month, we celebrate National Adoption Month in the United States. More children from China are adopted by American families into their homes than from any other country. Over the last ten years, more than 55,000 children have been adopted from China alone. Americans are increasingly adopting children with special needs from China. Of the roughly 3,400 adoptions between China and the United State last year, approximately two thirds were children with special needs.

When families open their hearts and homes to children who need a

permanent, loving home, they give vulnerable children the opportunity to thrive. Families who adopt are enriched by the love of their new children and the heritage they bring from their birth country. This November, we celebrate National Adoption Month and join with groups across the nation to recognize and honor the great commitment of all the families who embrace children through adoption.

For more information about inter-country adoption and a message from Secretary Clinton about adoption, please visit adoption.state.gov.

Upcoming Holidays and Other Closures

The American Citizen Services Unit will be **CLOSED** on the following days:

December 24, Friday:

Christmas Day

December 31, Friday:

New Year's Day

January 3, Monday:

New Year's Day

Beware of Scam Artists

The American Citizen Services section has been contacted recently regarding two scams involving American citizens. **The first scam is called the "black money" scam.** The scam involves sending a letter or directly contacting the victim explaining that, in order to prevent the theft of U.S. currency being shipped overseas, the U.S. government has a process to coat \$100 bills with a special ink (usually black). The criminal explains that one such shipment has been intercepted, and if the victim helps purchase a special solvent to "clean" the bills, the criminal will share the proceeds. The process is bogus, and the victim loses whatever money they have invested.

The second scam is called the **"grandparents" scam.** This scam involves a call to a family member, usually a grandparent, by the scam artist. In the call, the scam artist impersonates the grandchild and explains a series of unfortunate or embarrassing events, and asks that the grandparent wire them money to deal with the situation quietly. In one instance, the scam artist called the grandparent and explained that he was arrested for public drunkenness and needed money to pay the fine without alerting his parents. The grandparent then wired the money to an account he/she believes is **the grandchild's, but the account belongs to the scammer.** The grandpar-

ent or family member lost whatever money they wired.

These two cases are reminders that we should always be aware of our surroundings and be alert to scams. If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is. **With scams like the "grandparent scam", always try to get independent verification of the grandchild's whereabouts and situation before sending money or providing any personal information.**

If you hear of any scams from friends and acquaintances, please let us know so that we can alert others.

Security Situation - Travel Warnings and Alerts

Security reminder: It is advisable that you and your family review your personal security profile and to be aware of your surroundings at all times.

Since our previous Newsletter, the U.S. Department of State has issued new Travel Warnings for the following countries:

<u>Congo, Democratic Republic of the</u>	11/25/2010
<u>Colombia</u>	11/10/2010
<u>Iraq</u>	11/05/2010
<u>Burundi</u>	11/04/2010
<u>Philippines</u>	11/02/2010

Travel Warnings are issued to describe long-term, protracted conditions that make a country dangerous or unstable. A Travel Warning is also issued when the U.S. Government's ability to assist American citizens is constrained due to the closure of an embassy or consulate or because of a drawdown of its staff. This information is available at

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html.

The U.S. Department of State also has issued new Travel Alerts:

<u>Indonesia</u>	11/10/2010
<u>St. Lucia</u>	11/03/2010

Travel Alerts are issued to disseminate information about short-term conditions generally within a particular country or region that pose imminent risks to the security of U.S. citizens. Natural disasters, terrorist attacks, coups, anniversaries of terrorist events, election-related demonstrations or violence, and high-profile events such as international conferences or regional sports events are examples of conditions that might generate a Travel Alert. This information is available at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1766.html.

The most up-to-date information regarding permitted and prohibited items on flights can be viewed online at <http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm>.

For additional information, please visit "Americans Traveling Abroad" on the U.S. Department of State website: http://travel.state.gov/visa/americans/americans_1252.html. Students traveling abroad may wish to visit the State Department site designed for them: <http://studentsabroad.state.gov/>.

To obtain up-to-date information on security conditions, please call 1-888-407-4747 (toll free in the United States), or +1-202-501-4444 if you are outside the United States.

You may also visit the Consular Affairs twitter page at <http://twitter.com/TravelGov>.

Final Rule Adjusting Fees for Immigration Benefits

After Public Comment, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Announces Final Rule Adjusting Fees for Immigration Benefits

Introduction

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) today announced a [final rule](http://www.ofr.gov/OFRUpload/OFRData/2010-23725_PI.pdf) (http://www.ofr.gov/OFRUpload/OFRData/2010-23725_PI.pdf) adjusting fees for immigration applications and petitions. The final rule follows a period of public comment on a proposed version of the rule, which USCIS published in the *Federal Register* (<http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-13991.pdf>) on June 11, 2010. After encouraging stakeholders to share their input, USCIS considered all 225 comments received. The final rule will increase overall fees by a weighted average of about 10 percent but will not increase the fee for the naturalization application. The rule will also reduce fees for six individual applications and petitions and will expand the availability of fee waivers to new categories. The final rule will be published in the *Federal Register* September 24, and the adjusted fees will go into effect on November 23, 2010.

USCIS is a primarily fee-based organization with about 90 percent of its budget coming from fees paid by applicants and petitioners for immigration benefits. The law requires USCIS to conduct fee reviews every two years to determine whether it is recovering its costs to administer the **nation's immigration laws, process applications, and provide the infrastructure needed to support those activities.** Remaining funds come

from appropriations provided annually by Congress. The final fee rule concludes a comprehensive fee review begun in 2009.

USCIS's Fee-based Budget

Fees account for approximately \$2.4 **billion of USCIS's \$2.8 billion budget** request for fiscal year (FY) 2011. More than two-thirds of the budget supports the adjudication of applications and petitions for immigration benefits at USCIS field offices, service centers, customer service call centers and records facilities. The remainder supports USCIS business transformation efforts and the funding of headquarters program offices.

The adjudication areas supported by fees include the following:

- Family-based petitions - facilitating the process for close relatives to immigrate, gain permanent residency, travel and work;
- Employment-based petitions - facilitating the process for current and prospective employees to immigrate to or stay in the U.S. temporarily;
- Asylum and refugee processing - adjudicating asylum and processing refugees;
- Naturalization - adjudicating eligibility for U.S. citizenship;
- Special status programs - *adjudicating eligibility for U.S. immigration status as a form of humanitarian aid to foreign nationals; and*
- Document issuance and renewal - verifying eligibility for, producing and issuing immigration documents.

USCIS's fee revenue in fiscal years 2008 and 2009 was much lower than

projected, and fee revenue in fiscal year 2010 remains low. While USCIS did receive appropriations from Congress and made budget cuts of approximately \$160 million, this has not bridged the remaining gap between costs and anticipated revenue. A fee adjustment, as detailed in the final rule, is necessary to ensure USCIS recovers the costs of its operations while also meeting the application processing goals identified in the 2007 fee rule.

Highlights of the 2010 Final Fee Rule

The final fee rule will increase the average application and petition fees by approximately 10 percent. In recognition of the unique importance of naturalization, the final fee rule contains no increase in the naturalization application fee.

The final fee rule establishes three new fees for:

- Regional center designation under the Immigrant Investor Pilot Program (EB-5);
- Individuals seeking civil surgeon designation (with an exemption for certain physicians who examine servicemembers, veterans, and their families at U.S. government facilities); and
- Recovery of the USCIS cost of processing immigrant visas granted by the Department of State.

The final fee rule adjusts fees for the premium processing service. This

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Two Tips to Keep Your Belongings Safe

Pickpockets and Bag-snatchers!!

Please keep your eyes (and/or hands) on your belongings. **It's easy** to be lulled into a false sense of security here in East China (Shanghai, Zhejiang, Anhui, Jiangsu). The level of crime, even here in Shanghai, is generally lower than in comparably-sized cities elsewhere. However, **Shanghai is still a "Big City" with its** share of unbelievably talented pickpockets and bag-snatchers. We receive frequent reports from resi-

dents and visitors about the theft of wallets and bags from various locations – restaurants, hotels, clubs, etc – that they would have otherwise be considered quite secure.

Always get a receipt from your taxi driver!!

Ever left something in the back of a taxi never to see it again? If **it hasn't happened to you, it's**

surely happened to someone you know. If you accidentally leave something in a taxi, the best way to improve your chances of ever seeing it again is to call the number printed on the receipt. So, take the extra 10 seconds to wait for the receipt from your taxi driver. You never know when **you'll need it. If you don't speak** Chinese very well, you can also call 962288 for free multi-lingual assistance.

Education Hour Consolidated With Tues. Visa Hour

The former Wednesday Education Hour has been consolidated with **the Tuesday American Citizens' Visa Hour**.

The American Citizens' Visa Hour is held by the Shanghai Consulate every Tuesday afternoon from 3:00-4:00 p.m. During the Visa Hour, American citizens may ask questions regarding the non-immigrant visa processes. Since Shanghai does not process immigrant visas, we request that all immigrant visa

questions be directed to U.S. Consulate General Guangzhou (http://guangzhou.usembassy-china.org.cn/immigrant_visas.html).

Visa Hour is designed for information purposes only and not as an opportunity to submit a visa application or to re-adjudicate a prior visa decision. Please arrive no later than 3 p.m. in order to hear important general informa-

tion about the visa process. Only American citizens will be allowed to access this service, and an American passport will be required for entry into the Consular Section. Appointments are not necessary. Citizens of other countries, including Legal Permanent Residents of the United States, may not participate in Visa Hour. Alternatively, inquiries about specific cases may be faxed to the Non-immigrant Visa Unit at (86-21) 6217-2072.

Leaving Shanghai Consular District?

If you are departing the Shanghai consular district after a long stay here and you formally registered your stay with the U.S. Consulate, please do not forget to cancel your registration when you leave.

You can unregister yourself by visiting the <https://travelregistration.state.gov> site if you previously registered through this site.

If you previously submitted a paper registration form to the U.S. consulate, you may unregister yourself by sending an email request to:

ShanghaiACS@state.gov.

Final Rule Adjusting Fees for Immigration Benefits

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adjustment will ensure that USCIS can continue to modernize as an efficient and effective organization.

The final fee rule reduces fees for six individual applications and petitions:

- Petition for Alien Fiancé (Form I-129F);
- Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status (Form I-539);
- Application to Adjust Status from Temporary to Permanent Resident (Form I-698);
- Application for Family Unity Benefits (Form I-817);
- Application for Replacement Naturalization/Citizenship Document (Form N-565); and
- Application for Travel Document (Form I-131), when filed for Refugee Travel Document.

The final fee rule eliminates two citizenship-related fees for those service members and veterans of the U.S. armed forces who are eligible to file an Application for Naturalization (Form N-400) with no fee:

- Request for Hearing on a Decision in Naturalization Proceedings (Form N-336); and
- Application for Certificate of Citizenship (Form N-600).

Lastly, the final fee rule expands the availability of fee waivers to new categories, including:

- Individuals seeking humanitarian parole under an Application for Travel Document (Form I-131);
- Individuals with any benefit request under the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008; and
- Individuals filing a Notice of Appeal or Motion (Form I-290B) following a denial of any application or petition that did not initially require a fee.

Final Rule: Schedule of Fees

The following schedule lists the adjusted fees that will take effect on November 23, 2010, alongside the existing fees in effect until that date:

Form No.	Application/Petition Description	Old Fees	New Fees
I-90	Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card	\$290	\$365
I-102	Application for Replacement/Initial Nonimmigrant Arrival-Departure Document	\$320	\$330
I-129/CW	Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker	\$320	\$325
I-129F	Petition for Alien Fiancé(e)	\$455	\$340
I-130	Petition for Alien Relative	\$355	\$420
I-131	Application for Travel Document	\$305	\$360
I-140	Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker	\$475	\$580
I-191	Application for Advance Permission to Return to Unrelinquished Domicile	\$545	\$585
I-192	Application for Advance Permission to Enter as Nonimmigrant	\$545	\$585
I-193	Waiver of Passport and/or Visa	\$545	\$585
I-212	Application for Permission to Reapply for Admission into the U.S. after Deportation or Removal	\$545	\$585
I-290B	Notice of Appeal or Motion	\$585	\$630
I-360	Petition for Amerasian, Widow(er), or Special Immigrant	\$375	\$405
I-485	Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status	\$930	\$985
I-526	Immigrant Petition by Alien Entrepreneur	\$1435	\$1500
I-539	Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status	\$300	\$290
I-600/A I-800/A	Petition to Classify Orphan as an Immediate Relative/Application for Advance Processing of Orphan Petition	\$670	\$720
I-601	Application for Waiver of Ground of Excludability	\$545	\$585
I-612	Application for Waiver of the Foreign Residence Requirement	\$545	\$585
I-687	Application for Status as a Temporary Resident under Sections 245A or 210 of the Immigration and Nationality Act	\$710	\$1130
I-690	Application for Waiver of Grounds of Inadmissibility	\$185	\$200
I-694	Notice of Appeal of Decision under Sections 245A or 210 of the Immigration and Nationality Act	\$545	\$755
I-698	Application to Adjust Status from Temporary to Permanent Resident (Under Section 245A of Public Law 99-603)	\$1370	\$1020
I-751	Petition to Remove the Conditions of Residence	\$465	\$505
I-765	Application for Employment Authorization	\$340	\$380
I-817	Application for Family Unity Benefits	\$440	\$435
I-824	Application for Action on an Approved Application or Petition	\$340	\$405
I-829	Petition by Entrepreneur to Remove Conditions	\$2850	\$3750
I-881	Application for Suspension of Deportation or Special Rule Cancellation of Removal (Pursuant to Section 203 of Public Law 105-110)	\$285	\$285
I-907	Request for Premium Processing Service	\$1000	\$1225
	Civil Surgeon Designation	\$0	\$615
I-924	Application for Regional Center under the Immigrant Investor Pilot Program	\$0	\$6230
N-300	Application to File Declaration of Intention	\$235	\$250
N-336	Request Hearing on a Decision in Naturalization Proceedings	\$605	\$650
N-400	Application for Naturalization	\$595	\$595
N-470	Application to Preserve Residence for Naturalization	\$305	\$330
N-565	Replacement Naturalization/Citizenship Document	\$380	\$345
N-600/ 600K	Application for Certification of Citizenship/ Application for Citizenship and Issuance of Certificate under Section 322	\$460	\$600
	Immigrant Visa	\$0	\$165
Biometrics	Capturing, Processing, and Storing Biometric Information	\$80	\$85

Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

U.S. Consulate General, Shanghai, China

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Open 8:00am - 11:30am

and 1:30pm - 3:30pm

Monday to Friday *Closed on
Tuesday afternoons, weekends,
and holidays.

<http://shanghai.usconsulate.gov>

TAX NEWS

IMPORTANT INFO—THE IRS WILL NOT BE MAILING INDIVIDUAL OR BUSINESS TAX PACKAGES BEGINNING FY2010

Individual and business taxpayers will no longer receive paper income tax packages in the mail from the IRS. These tax packages contained the forms, schedules and instructions for filing a paper income tax return.

The IRS is taking this step because of the continued growth in electronic filing, the availability of free options to taxpayers, and to help reduce costs.

In early October, the IRS sent a postcard to individuals who filed paper returns last year and did not use a tax preparer or tax software.

- Individuals making \$49,000 or less can use the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program for free tax preparation and, in many cases, free electronic filing.
- Individuals aged 60 and older can take advantage of free tax counseling and basic income tax preparation through Tax Counseling for the Elderly.
- IRS Free File provides options for free brand-name tax software or online fillable forms plus free electronic filing. Everyone can use Free File to prepare a federal tax return. Taxpayers who make \$58,000 or less can choose **from approximately 20 commercial software providers. There's no income limit for Free File Fillable Forms**, the electronic version of IRS paper forms, which also has free e-filing.

If you have any questions regarding this alert, please contact the International Program administrators at wi.international.administrator@irs.gov.

Be Aware of IRS Scams

Recently, some overseas taxpayers have received bogus IRS letters via fax or email requesting them to complete a Form W-8BEN (Certificate of Foreign Status of Beneficial Owner for United States Tax Withholding). While the Form W-8BEN is a legitimate IRS form, it is sent to the recipients by their financial institutions, not the IRS. It is used to establish beneficial owner of financial accounts for withholding purposes.

There are also other types of emails claiming that you are due a refund from electronically filed tax return, and asked for personal information.

The IRS does NOT generally initiate fax or emails to taxpayers, nor does the IRS discuss tax account matters

with taxpayers via email or fax. Moreover, the IRS never requests security-related personal information, such as your SSN or PIN numbers. Please be suspicious of any fax, email or phone call asking for your personal identification information.

How to protect yourself from IRS scams

Taxpayers who receive a suspicious e-mail claiming to come from the IRS should take the following steps:

- Avoid opening any attachments to the e-mail in case they contain malicious code that will infect your computer.
- Avoid clicking on any links for the same reason. Moreover, the links may connect to a phony IRS Web site that appears authentic and

then prompts for personal identifiers, bank or credit card account numbers or PINs.

- Visit the IRS Web site, **www.irs.gov**, use the "Where's My Refund?" interactive tool to determine if you are really getting a refund, rather than responding to the e-mail message.
- Forward the suspicious e-mail or URL address to the IRS mailbox phishing@irs.gov, and then delete the e-mail from the inbox.

For more information on IRS-impersonation scams, identity theft and suspicious e-mail, please go to <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=155682,00.html?portlet=7>. You may also contact the IRS office in Building irs.beijing@irs.gov if you have further questions.